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AUTHOR Kunkle, Virginia Lloyd; Gabler, Cecil W.
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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet discusses how Ohio is attempting to meet the challenge to eradicate functional illiteracy within the time span of the 1970's. Included in the contents are: planning guidelines, the organizational structure, the overall objectives of the Ohio program, report of the first year of the program, second year developments and accomplishments, and Ohio's participation in the national Right to Read effort. An appendix of the area chairmen and area members of the State Right to Read Commission is included. (WR)

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STATE RIGHT TO READ STAFF

DIRECTOR

Mrs. Virginia Lloyd Kunkle

CONSULTANT

Miss Nancy A. Eberhart

FEDERALLY APPOINTED CONSULTANT TO SITES

Dr. Joseph S. Nemeth

PUBLICATION PREPARED BY

Mrs. Virginia Lloyd Kunkle

and

Mr. Cecil W. Gabler

Right to Read Fieldworker; Area II

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OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Martin W. Essex • SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Franklin B. Walter • DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

C. Robert Bowers • ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT—INSTRUCTION

J. E. Brown • DIRECTOR, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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A NEW SPIRIT OF '76
the right to read

During this current decade, our nation will celebrate the anniversary of its two hundredth birthday.

Tribute again will be paid to those patriots who fashioned the democratic structure under which our country has functioned and flourished for the past two centuries; attention again will focus on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice which permeated all that they did—all that they dreamed for this nation to become. The Spirit of '76 again will become a viable influence, not only for renewing our faith in these basic principles, but, hopefully, for reviving our efforts to transform this "patriots' dream" into a functioning reality.

And there is evidence that this is happening—that a new spirit of '76 is already underway, is developing and may reach fruition during this epochal anniversary decade.

Historically, it is quite possible that our present period will be characterized as one in which people became actively concerned about those for whom the American system does not always provide freedom, equality and justice. Minority groups, the poor, the aged, alienated youths, the disadvantaged child, the physically handicapped, the culturally deprived—all, have become living reminders that much still needs to be done if we truly are to become the land of the free, with liberty and justice for all.

People in education have always been sensitive to human deprivation and inequality. Much of what we do in education is supplementary and compensatory in nature. Little wonder then, when the need for national literacy was so forcibly pointed out by the late Commissioner James E. Allen, that educators should respond to the challenge that Right to Read entails.

A national goal to ensure "that by the end of the 1970's no boy or girl shall be leaving our schools without the skill and desire to read to the full limits of his capacity," is in keeping with true American tradition. The ability of citizens to read well is fundamental to the preservation of our self-governing society; without it, economic sufficiency becomes increasingly unattainable; without it, "equal opportunity" becomes a meaningless mockery.

Education has been challenged to take a giant step. The fervent response of Ohio teachers and their associated publics represents Americanism at its best. It typifies the new spirit of '76.

FOREWORD

This is the story of how one state, Ohio, is attempting to meet the challenge to eradicate functional illiteracy within the time span of the 1970's.

It is a story not a great deal unlike that written some two hundred years ago when the design for our democracy was first conceived and brought into being. Like the story of our country's founding, Ohio's Right to Read program has been guided from its inception by an over-arching human goal--that of providing equal opportunity to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

More specifically, that ultimate goal is to send forth into the Twenty-First Century Ohioans equipped with the tool of maximum reading capability and the desire to be lifetime readers. Reading is the priority skill indispensable for survival in an increasingly competitive, complex world. It lays the foundation for a better informed, understanding, contributing, participating citizenry, both at home and in the World Community.

In this brief report we have attempted to point up the underlying principles upon which the Ohio plan is based, the strategies and organizational plans that are being employed and the results that have been achieved. After two years we are critically examining our Right to Read efforts--our accomplishments, our unmet goals and the roadblocks we have encountered. Through this process it is our hope that this publication will afford us the opportunity to learn from each other. It is also our hope that this record of what one state has done may serve as a guide and reference source for others who are engaged in similar planning activities.

What follows is Right to Read as it is developing in Ohio. As you shall see, it has been a people-oriented approach, reflecting the magnificent creative input of many Ohioans working together. There is a pulse beat for it! It's becoming a happening!

When will this significant beginning really make the difference in terms of reading gains made by individual students? That remains the hard question. May this accounting serve as a catalyst toward the answer.

COMMITMENT

The disconcerting facts about reading deficiencies among our citizenry revealed by U.S. Commissioner of Education, James E. Allen, came as a distinct shock to many. The priority status given to reading improvement by the U.S. Office of Education signaled the urgent need for a concerted, nationwide attack on this condition.

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THE RESOLUTION BY THE STATE BOARD

In Ohio there was an almost immediate response. In November of 1969 the Right to Read program was inaugurated by resolution of the State Board of Education endorsing a plan designed to stimulate new approaches and effect new accomplishments in the reading capabilities of Ohio students. This action served to point the way for boards of education in local communities to join with professionals, parents and community groups to seek solutions.

APPOINTMENT OF STATE RIGHT TO READ COMMISSION

Immediately following this action, Dr. Martin Essex, State Superintendent, appointed a State Right to Read Commission to provide organizational leadership, to function as an idea bank and to disseminate research data.

The basis for membership selection to this body has proved to be a key factor in the success of the Ohio program. Dr. Essex followed the principle of diversification in naming members to the Commission to involve a broad spectrum of leaders from many sectors of American life. Included are educators representative of all types of professional positions in the public and non-public schools and in teacher training institutions. Among non-educator constituents are citizens, agency professionals, librarians, school board members and representatives from such school-related organizations as the International Reading Association and the Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers.

In addition to becoming a model for area and local committees that subsequently were formed, this membership pattern has made possible the effective linkage system that is characteristic of Ohio Right to Read.

PLANNING GUIDELINES

Among those who did the preliminary planning for Right to Read in Ohio, there was little question about the ultimate goal they hoped to achieve and the humanitarian purpose to be served. The stakes of the endeavor were high, dealing as they do with feelings of personal worth, fulfillment, participating citizenship and economic sufficiency. The paramount problem centered around the organizational plan required for the undertaking of such massive proportions.

The need was recognized for establishing basic, guiding principles to provide unity and consistency to overall planning. The following were agreed upon and have been incorporated into the Ohio Right to Read plan:

To utilize a broad-based, people-oriented approach

This involves participation by all kinds of people—educators both public and non-public, representing all types of positions and ranging from pre-kindergarten to university personnel; non-educators, representing school-related organizations and agencies, the news media, school board members, parents and the general public.

This approach implies general involvement as opposed to that restricted to just a segment of those engaged in the educative process.

To recognize the centrality of the need for local involvement

Success for Right to Read must ultimately be measured in terms of what it has done for children—what has happened in the classroom that has made them better readers. For the child who is not learning to read, improvement can come only from those who know him, who teach him, who can determine what his needs are and who can modify their program to provide for these. This involves study and planning at the staff or building level.

To provide a structure for achieving Right to Read goals, but to encourage local interpretation and local adaptation

This is the traditional democratic approach—it is also typical of how Ohio has functioned in the past in areas

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To decentralize efforts, responsibility and control

The logistics of communication and dissemination alone require this. More importantly, however, a regional approach is consistent with the principle of local involvement and local adaptation.

To expand the national goal focused on eliminating illiteracy to include the improvement of reading programs in general

While the program is directed primarily at those children who are experiencing difficulty in learning to read, it is also concerned about those who read but who should be reading better.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The intent of the first year's operation of this comprehensive effort for the Seventies was to establish the foundation for the organizational and communication systems essential for achieving long-range goals. The 5,113 school communities of Ohio needed to be made aware of the Right to Read program, its purposes, its implications for local participation. They also needed to be provided an organizational structure that would bring the action directly to their doorsteps.

To accomplish this, the 88 counties of the state were clustered into twelve Right to Read Areas, each guided by the leadership of a designated superintendent and an elementary education supervisor.

The map shows the groupings of counties that constitute Ohio's twelve Right to Read areas.

To promote generalized involvement, Area Right to Read Councils were organized in each of the twelve regions with repeat organizations in each of their geographic subdivisions of cities, counties and local school districts. Keyed to the goal for representative participation, councils at each level were encouraged to replicate the membership pattern of the State Commission.

The network of councils in the organizational plan was designed to place each Ohio teacher in contact with the Right to Read program.

The schematic shows how this has been accomplished.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

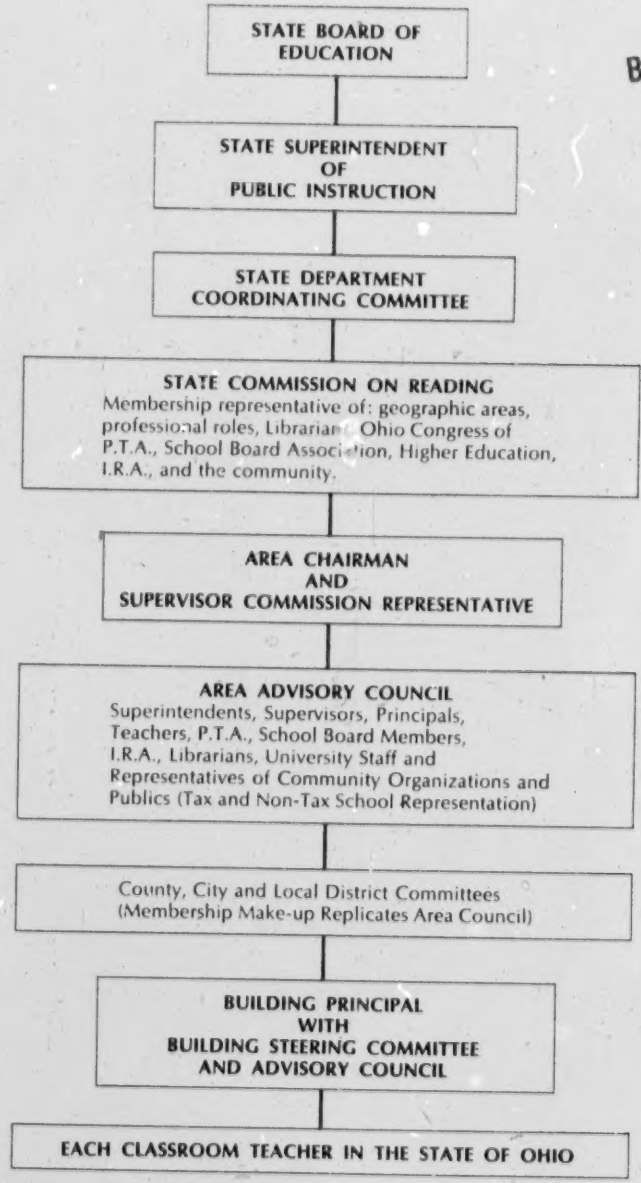
Initially, Title III funds amounting to $180,000 were made available to Area Councils to carry on their regional activities and to finance the various information, planning and inservice meetings necessary for initiating the program and creating general awareness. In each of the following two years, this amount was increased to $300,000 for program operation in the twelve areas.

As previously stated, a unique feature of the Ohio plan has been its provision for local interpretation and local adaptation. No attempt was made to stereotype work of the Area Council other than to assure that proper fiscal control was maintained. In fact, a differentiated approach was encouraged so that reading improvement programs would be tailored to meet the unique needs and interests of each area.

As a guide for program development overall, long-range objectives were formulated and made available. In addition, as a format for initial planning by Area Councils, specific first-year objectives were formulated. In essence they include (1) planning inservice (types and extent of meetings), (2) creating a climate for exchange of ideas and cooperative efforts, (3) locating and identifying leadership resources, and (4) developing plans and support services for local programs.

The basic, overall objective of the Ohio program is two-fold:

1. to provide every elementary and secondary school student in Ohio with opportunities to secure reading skills which enable optimum personal, academic and social development; and
2. to provide every professional staff member in Ohio's elementary and secondary schools with opportunities to secure training which develops optimum competence necessary to achieve the first purpose most effectively and efficiently.


STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE DEPARTMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
STATE COMMISSION ON READING
Membership representative of: geographic areas, professional roles, Librarians, Ohio Congress of P.T.A., School Board Association, Higher Education, I.R.A., and the community.
AREA CHAIRMAN AND SUPERVISOR COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVE
AREA ADVISORY COUNCIL
Superintendents, Supervisors, Principals, Teachers, P.T.A., School Board Members, I.R.A., Librarians, University Staff and Representatives of Community Organizations and Publics (Tax and Non-Tax School Representation)
County, City and Local District Committees
(Membership Make-up Replicates Area Council)
BUILDING PRINCIPAL WITH BUILDING STEERING COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY COUNCIL
EACH CLASSROOM TEACHER IN THE STATE OF OHIO

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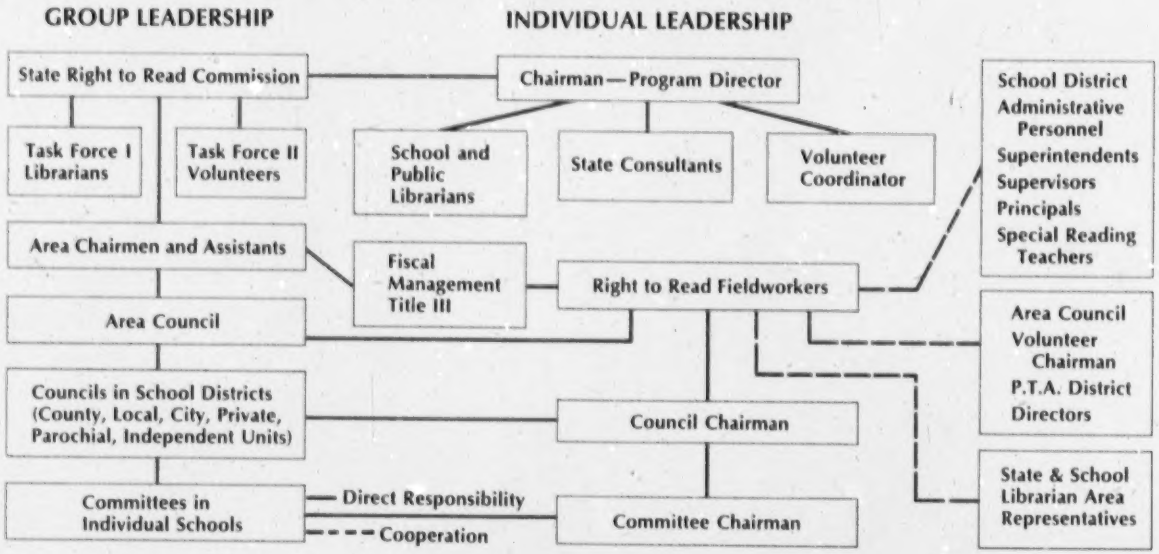
The specific objectives are as follows:

- To improve reading instruction on all grade levels K-12
- To apply diagnostic teaching methods to provide varied and effective learning experiences for all students represented on the ability spectrum
- To teach reading in an integrated meaningful relationship to all aspects of language development on all grade levels and in all subject areas
- To select and use a variety of multi-level materials to meet the learning needs and interests of students
- To be concerned about the quality of encouragement and motivation which surrounds the learner in his encounter with the printed page
- To strengthen early childhood learning opportunities through a thoughtful approach to reading experiences in the kindergarten in terms of early identification and the provision of suitable learning activities
- To provide diagnosis and treatment of reading problems ranging from slight to severe
- To utilize research and develop experimental programs to reach identified problems which exist in individual classrooms, schools and communities
- To work with parents to help them to understand the reading process and to learn how to help their children
- To train non-professionals who work in our schools for their support roles as they relate to reading

TEAM PROGRAM ORGANIZATION CHART



HEADWAY

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THE ACTION BEGINS

During the first year of the program, the progress within the twelve areas vividly demonstrated the excitement and enthusiasm with which Ohioans accepted the challenge that had been presented. Area Councils went into action, each with its own approach adapted to its own local conditions and needs, but directed toward one common goal—a better reading program for Ohio children.

The quality and variety of Right to Read activities reflected the diligent, creative planning efforts of the newly formed Area Councils. Similar patterns of attainment and difficulty were experienced along the progress spectrum. Ranges of success levels, caused by various contributing factors, were evident.

INFORMATION MEETINGS HELD

Efforts the first year centered on generating an awareness of Right to Read purposes and goals. Recognizing the need to establish a communications network and to activate a working organizational structure, Area Councils sponsored meetings for the educators and community representatives of Ohio's 626 school districts. Attendance at these meetings ranged from 25 to 1,400; but, regardless of the size or constituency of the audience, the purpose was always the same—to tell the story of Right to Read and to enlist commitment.

RIGHT TO READ BECOMES NEWSWORTHY

A breakthrough to community awareness came in the media coverage of these forums. The mere fact that they were held produced accounts of Right to Read in local newspapers and on radio and T.V. Additional news stories resulted from the adoption of resolutions of endorsement by local boards of education. Editorials appeared in newspapers throughout the state—some calling for assessment of local reading programs, others commending local groups for their involvement in the Right to Read effort.

A LINKAGE SYSTEM DEVELOPS

Another significant development was observed. Across the state a design for cooperative action emerged linking Right to Read with civic service clubs, Parent and Teachers Associations and professional organizations such as the International Reading Association.

An exemplary partnership between personnel of the Ohio Department of Education and the State Library resulted in a series of summer Right to Read Caravan Meetings. This cooperative undertaking set the stage for uniting further the roles of educators and librarians. The alliance has proved to be a natural one since both professional groups work closely with potential readers and the world of books.

FIRST-YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A host of other accomplishments emerged from Area programs. Among these were: planning for the use of volunteers, arranging course work for the training and certification of reading specialists, establishing diagnostic reading centers, locating superior classroom reading models, identifying competent reading teachers and compiling rosters of resource personnel for reading inservice.

SOME ROADBLOCKS ARE ENCOUNTERED

At the close of the 1970-71 school term a State Commission meeting was held to evaluate the work of the first year as a basis for modifications that might be required. Area chairmen reported both the progress they had made and the difficulties they had encountered.

Some of the reported deterrents to progress were regional in nature. Among these were travel and transportation difficulties experienced in a seventeen-county area; the disparity between rural and urban societal requirements; the need for broader-based, more-frequent communications within communities; the lack of immediate involvement by some administrators, teachers and communities; and the absence of

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mutually agreeable arrangements for released time for teachers participating in the project.

Three major areas of concern emerged as being most significant to the future of the program.

Overriding all of these was the need for full-time coordinating personnel. Superintendents serving as Area Chairmen expressed the limitations in program development that resulted from their inability to devote sufficient time to this purpose.

A second pressing need common to most areas was for the development of appropriate and effective inservice training programs for volunteers and the teachers whom they assist. It was pointed out that as instruction became more individualized, many schools were utilizing the vast reservoir of interested people who are willing to serve both in the classrooms and in the libraries.

A third area in which additional assistance appeared to be necessary was in the assessment process. Local planning groups were asking for both a procedure and an instrument for evaluating their programs as a basis for their initial reading improvement strategies. Still other groups were requesting guidance and assistance in providing for the continuous evaluation of reading improvement programs that already were underway.

SECOND YEAR DEVELOPMENTS

The most significant modification characterizing second-year operation was the addition of full-time coordinating personnel. At the State Department level, the program director was given full-time consultant assistance.

Similarly, at the area level, fieldworkers were employed to assist volunteer chairmen and to provide the continuous, ongoing leadership that the expanding programs required. The role of the fieldworker broadly included responsibilities along the entire leadership spectrum—he was to serve as a researcher, an evaluator, a planner, a teamworker and a communicator.

THE TASK FORCES OF THE OHIO PLAN

As the scope of Right to Read in Ohio broadened, two task forces became integral parts of the organizational structure—one involving library services, the other, volunteer enlistment and training. Staff members from the State Department were given leadership roles in each of these areas.

Two workshops were held, one in each task force field. The first of these brought fieldworkers and educators from the twelve areas into contact with personnel from the National Reading Center who conducted a two-day workshop in volunteer training. Participants in the workshop have since become the nuclei around which the twelve area volunteer training groups have been organized.

The second task force workshop involved fieldworkers, school librarians, public librarians and personnel from the State Library of Ohio. Various areas of mutual interest were explored and a potentially productive working relationship was established.

SECOND YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A remarkably similar pattern of progress was reported by the twelve Area Councils during the second year of Right to Read in Ohio. To varying degrees, each council was successful in accomplishing the following:

Inservice was provided extensively as needed
This tended to be geared to specific local needs; however, some meetings were county or city-wide in character involving as many as 1,500 educators.

Communications within the area and between areas were greatly improved
All areas published monthly newsletters. A circulation pattern developed that placed each Ohio educator in touch with what was happening in Right to Read in his area, throughout the state and at the national level.

Other media used effectively included radio and T.V., the newspaper, exhibits and slide-tape presentations.

Area organizational structures were expanded and made more functional
Most areas operated on the recommended area-county-building council plan. Many councils expanded their membership to more completely replicate the suggested pattern.

All areas compiled a directory of innovative and exemplary reading programs within their district
The primary purpose of the directory was to promote and facilitate intra-area visitation and communication and to

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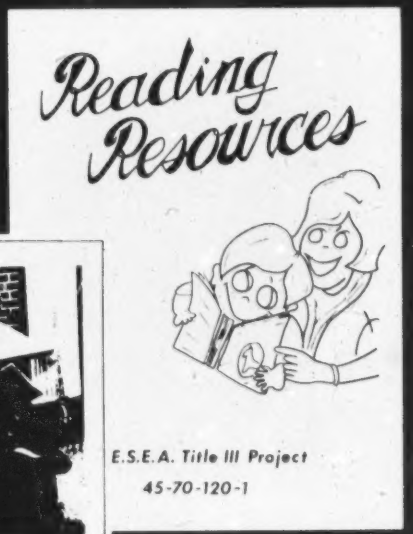
identify models that could be replicated. Several of these, however, were organized as a comprehensive reference source for local planning groups and contained bibliographies, audiovisual lists and other pertinent resource information.

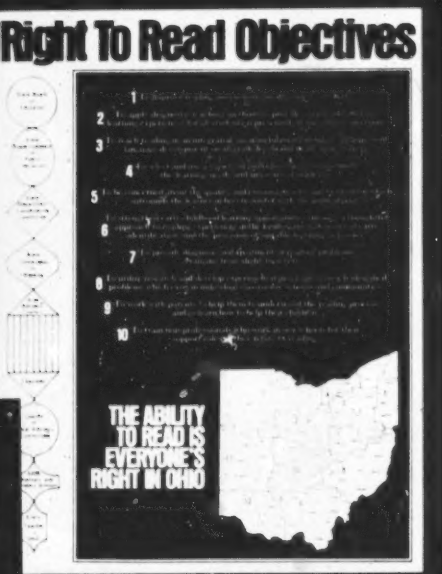
Key resource people in reading were identified
Lists of available college personnel and regional teachers with expertise in reading were compiled and circulated to area schools.

Volunteer aides were recruited and trained
Right to Read cooperated with other organized efforts in enlisting and training hundreds of volunteers for Ohio classrooms. The use of this human resource potential has made it possible for many schools to provide the personalization of instruction that reading requires.

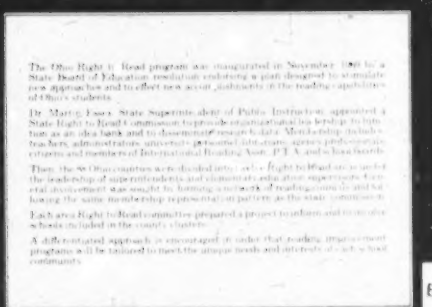
Local planning groups were provided up-to-date and pertinent information about reading
Publications and print materials of various types were distributed. Included were research items, reprints, pamphlets, word lists, bibliographies, books, evaluation instruments and locally prepared, special purpose items.

No attempt has been made to single out any outstanding achievements at this point. In the "Idea Mart" that follows some of these have been pictured and described.



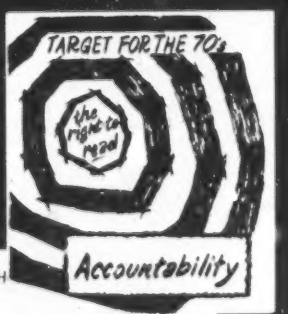


THE RIGHT TO READ IN OHIO



Research
Evaluate
Apply
Develop

Involves Every Teacher In Ohio



ELEMENTARY SCH

Right to Read

RIGHT TO READ PROGRAM

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SPINOFF

A key spinoff of the Right to Read effort has been the working relationships that have developed among groups who have been accustomed to "going it alone." Geographic barriers are practically non-existent in Right to Read affairs. The sharing of personnel, materials, inservice opportunities and professional know-how has been common practice throughout the twelve regional divisions.

This also extends to other areas of human relationships. County and city teachers, public and non-public, elementary and secondary, rural and urban have, in many cases, experienced the joys and advantages of working and planning together.

Colleges too have recognized the scope of the movement and are adapting their teacher preparation programs to the training needs of those in the field. The increased demand for reading specialists who qualify for certification under the new Ohio Teacher Education and Certification Standards has been eased, in part, through field courses taught on location in sequences adapted to the needs of those enrolled. A retreat-type reading conference for administrators needing course credit was arranged by one university.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which Right to Read should take credit for these developments. The important thing is they are happening. There *is* a pulse beat! Things are coming alive!

OHIO'S PARTICIPATION in national RTR effort

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In addition to conducting its own program, Ohio participates extensively in the national Right to Read effort sponsored by the Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Ohio sites were nominated as Right to Read Centers for demonstration and redirection. Berea, Cleveland and Morgan County are now receiving federal assistance in planning and implementing their model reading improvement programs.

Through Title II grants totaling $969,092, seventeen Ohio high schools have been designated as "Lighthouse Centers" in a project designed to determine the relative effectiveness of various materials and media as they are used in certain teaching strategies. At least one center is located in each Right to Read area.

In addition, the national Right to Read office recognized Ohio as a model state by awarding a special purpose grant. Ohio's plan to utilize these funds follows:

TARGET—READING IMPROVEMENT

Plan Design—1972-73

The umbrella objective is to viably activate the Right to Read effort in each school in the state. Planning and efforts at the area and state levels concert toward this goal with the means identified as:

needs assessment
development of an action plan
implementation
consistent evaluation
staff development
leadership
staff involvement
coordination of reading programs and related efforts

On the state level it is proposed that grant funds will be utilized to employ staff facilitators and to institute inservice programs for school administrators and staff.

The Personnel Component

part-time director
a three-member technical assistance team (the members to possess skills in evaluation, planning, and expertise in reading instruction)
consultant
fieldworkers

The Staff Development Component

area principal meetings to deal with: needs assessment, program management and awareness of effective instructional strategies and learning materials
teacher clusters to deal with diagnostic teaching, goal-directed instruction, performance evaluation

Continuing efforts would be directed toward:

identification and validation of model programs
the involvement of related organizations: The International Reading Association (request for each unit to develop a Right to Read project); public and school librarians; parent teacher organizations; state and federal legislators
the initiation of consortium meetings of the teachers of reading and deans of teacher training institutions to view preservice instruction in reading methods in terms of amounts of time and content

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IDEA MART

Pictured on these pages are examples of typical activities that have been a part of the Right to Read effort throughout Ohio. The collection falls far short of being a comprehensive depiction of the myriad of innovative pursuits and practices that have grown out of local reading improvement programs. Rather, the action that is pictured here is symbolic of what has been common to most of the twelve areas during the two years that the program has been in effect.

For this reason people and places have not been identified. The action that is pictured here has taken place in many locations in varying manners.

OUTREACH

Ohio has a great heritage. It was here that McGuffey produced a reader, Harvey a grammar, and Spencer introduced his script. It is here, also, that the Ketterings, Rockefellers, Firestones and many other pioneers and leaders in all fields of human endeavor received education which enabled them to serve society. As Ohio's Neil Armstrong made his "giant step for mankind" on the moon, we join together to make a giant step for Ohio's youth in improved reading for all, and overcoming illiteracy for those who have not benefited in the past.

In keeping with democratic tradition, unity but not uniformity hallmarks Ohio's "Right to Read" effort as the state plan is school-based and lerner-centered. The rally call is for the accomplishment of purpose through varied and creative approaches for solutions to reading difficulties.

As we approach the two-hundredth anniversary of our nation's founding, it is our earnest hope that this important event may take on more meaning to many of our young people who may not have otherwise attained the basic skills of reading and that our nation will have a brighter future for all as a result of these efforts.

Martin W. Essex
Superintendent of Public Instruction

The State Right To Read Commission

Virginia Lloyd Kunkle, Chairman
Assistant Director, Elementary Education
State Department of Education
Ohio Departments Building, Room 606
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-469-2761

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AREA CHAIRMEN

Area I **Mr. Victor Wood**
Superintendent
Oregon City Schools
5721 Seaman Road
Oregon, Ohio 43616
419-693-0661

Area II **Dr. Robert Brown**
Superintendent
Marion City Schools
445 S. Prospect Street
Box 509
Marion, Ohio 43302
614-383-1116

Area III **Mr. Ralph Gillman**
Superintendent
Summit County Public Schools
80 West Center Street
Akron, Ohio 44308
216-379-5708

Area IV **Dr. Dean Kelly**
Assistant Superintendent
Berea Public Schools
390 Fair Street
Berea, Ohio 44017
216-243-6000

Area V **Mr. Robert Roessner**
Assistant Superintendent
Painesville Local Schools
585 Riverside Drive
Painesville, Ohio 44077
216-352-0668

Area VI **Dr. Richard A. Boyd**
Superintendent
Warren City Schools
261 Monroe Street, N.W.
Warren, Ohio 44483
216-841-2310

Area VII **Mr. Clifford W. Tallman**
Superintendent
Jackson Local Schools
7355 Mudbrook Street, N.W.
Massillon, Ohio 44646
216-833-8515

Area VIII **Mr. James A. Dixon**
Superintendent
Bellaire City Schools
3517 Guernsey Street
Bellaire, Ohio 43906
614-676-1826

Area IX **Mr. Harvey W. Butcher**
Superintendent
Lawrence County Schools
Court House
Ironton, Ohio 45638
614-532-4223

Area X **Mr. Austin A. Peel**
Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Whitehall Public Schools
625 S. Yearling Road
Whitehall, Ohio 43213
614-235-2385

Area XI **Mr. Herman Brown**
Superintendent
Jefferson Township Local Schools
2701 South Union Road
Dayton, Ohio 45418
513-835-5696

Area XII **Mr. Brooks Parsons**
Superintendent
Norwood City Schools
2132 Williams Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45212
513-731-7600

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AREA MEMBERS

Sister Bernadine Jansen
Director of Elementary Education
The Youngstown Diocese
144 West Wood Street
Youngstown, Ohio 44503
216-744-8934

Mr. Arthur Bouldin
Chief, Office of Equal Educational Opportunities
State Department of Education
34 N. High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-469-5806

Mr. G. Robert Bowers
Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
State Department of Education
Ohio Departments Building, Room 607
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-469-2329

Mr. J. E. Brown
Director, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education
Ohio Departments Building, Room 606
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-469-2761

Mrs. Isabelle Carter
Assistant Principal
Nathan Hale Elementary School
Toledo City Schools
Foster and Shenandoah Avenues
Toledo, Ohio 43607
419-536-1211

Mr. John V. Chapman
Headmaster
The Columbus School for Girls
56 South Columbia Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43209
614-253-5587

Right Reverend Msgr. William Cornelius
Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Steubenville Diocese
422 Washington Street
Steubenville, Ohio 43952
614-282-9706

Dr. William Cooper
Professor of Education
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701
614-594-5809

Mrs. Pauline Davis
Education Program Manager
Reading Instruction
Cleveland City Schools
Jane Addams Annex
4940 Carnegie
Cleveland, Ohio 44103
216-391-5280

Miss Anne Dobbins
Principal
Case Elementary School
Akron City Schools
1393 Westvale Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44313
216-836-5898

Miss Anna Evans
Director of Elementary Education
Cincinnati City Schools
230 E. Ninth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
513-621-7010

Miss Betty Fisher
Coordinator of Elementary Education
Springfield City Schools
49 E. College Avenue
Springfield, Ohio 45501
513-322-6741

Mrs. Carolyn Forrest
Staff Development
Highland Park Elementary School
South-Western City Schools
2525 Hoover Road
Grove City, Ohio 43123
614-875-1025

Mrs. Hazel Foster
President, Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers
1541 Briarwood Terrace
Springfield, Ohio 45504
513-390-0067

Mrs. Ruth Gooding
Coordinator of Secondary Reading
Mentor Exempted Village Schools
8880 Lake Shore Boulevard
Mentor, Ohio 44060
216-255-4444

Mrs. Dorothy Hawke
Supervisor of Elementary Education
Warren County Schools
416 S. East Street, Box 148
Lebanon, Ohio 45036
513-932-3851

Miss Marvena Hershey
Supervisor of Elementary Education
Richland County Schools
Madison Local Schools
1515 Grace Street
Mansfield, Ohio 44905
419-589-2600

Dr. Glen Hollingsworth
Principal
Lathrop School
401—14th Street, S.E.
Canton, Ohio 44707
216-455-8995—Ext. 370

Dr. Charles B. Huelsman
Director, Child Study
Ohio State University
375 Arps Hall
1945 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43210
614-422-8789 or 9007

Mrs. Marilyn Ingersoll
Elm Street School
200 East 7th Street
Perrysburg, Ohio 43551
419-874-4430

Sister Marian Leonard
Reading Consultant
Cleveland Diocese
5103 Superior Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44103
216-361-7100

Mrs. Lillian Locke
Elementary Supervisor
Chesapeake Union Exempted Village
P. O. Box 458
Chesapeake, Ohio 45619
614-867-3448

Mrs. June Marable
Graduate Student
5145 Dayton Liberty Road
Dayton, Ohio 45418
513-263-9730

Mr. Lloyd McFarren
Director of Elementary Education
Canton City Schools
618 High Avenue, N.W.
Canton, Ohio 44703
216-455-8992

Dr. David Moberly
Superintendent
Cleveland Heights-University Heights
City Schools
2155 Miramar Boulevard
Cleveland, Ohio 44118
216-382-9200

Dr. Joseph Nemeth
Director, Reading Clinic
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402
419-372-2551

Miss Carol O'Connell
Consultant, Reading K-12
State Department of Education
781 Northwest Boulevard
Columbus, Ohio 43212
614-469-4274

Mr. William Oertel
Executive Director and Secretary
Ohio Newspaper Association
198 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Miss Hilda Oxley
Supervisor of Elementary Education
Huron County Schools
190 Benedict Avenue
Norwalk, Ohio 44857
419-663-9012

Mrs. Mary Poston
Director of Elementary Education
Union Local—Belmont County Schools
R. R. 1
Belmont, Ohio 43718
614-968-3613

Mrs. Lois Rodabaugh
Dean of Students
Eaton House
Bluffton College
Bluffton, Ohio 45817
419-358-8015—Ext. 192

Mrs. Eleanor Schaefer
Elementary Supervisor
Franklin County Schools
46 East Fulton Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-221-1211

Mr. Joseph F. Shubert
State Librarian
Ohio Departments Building
Room 1114
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-469-2694

Mr. Doyle K. Shumaker
Chief, Secondary Education
State Department of Education
Ohio Departments Bldg., Room 606
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-469-2761

Dr. Herman Sims
Assistant Superintendent
Wyoming City Schools
500 Grove Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45215
513-761-7857

Dr. Robert Sizemore
Director of Reading
Toledo City Schools
Manhattan and Elm
Toledo, Ohio 43608
419-729-5111

Mrs. Joan Smith
Coordinator, Elementary Education
Montgomery County Board of Education
Administration Office
15 North Main Street
Dayton, Ohio 45402
513-461-5836

Mr. Paul K. Spencer
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Elyria City Schools
Garfield Annex, 520 Clark Street
Elyria, Ohio 44035
216-322-4691

Dr. George E. Theobald
Deputy Superintendent
Cleveland Public Schools
1380 East Sixth Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
216-696-2929

Mr. Byron Walker
Consultant, Social Studies and
Humanities K-12
State Department of Education
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-469-2761

Mrs. Leona Weir
Supervisor of Intermediate Education
Cuyahoga Falls City Schools
431 Stow Street
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221
216-923-5283

Mr. LaVerne Williams
Brown and Williams Funeral Home
220 N. Sixth Street
Steubenville, Ohio 43952
614-283-2631

Dr. Maurice Williams
Associate Professor of Education
College of Education
The University of Akron
302 E. Buchtel Avenue
Akron, Ohio 43304
216-375-7759

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